

# How To Be Designated A Federal Depository Library

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A Handbook For Library  
Administrators Seeking Federal  
Depository Library Designation



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Superintendent of Documents  
Library Programs Service  
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**Accompanying Material:**

- Guidelines for the Depository Library System
- A Directory of U.S. Government Depository Libraries
  
- List of Regional Librarians
- List of State Librarians



# **How To Be Designated A Federal Depository Library**

## **I. Introduction**

The Depository Library Program originated in the early 1800's when a joint resolution of Congress directed that additional copies of the House and Senate Journals and other documents be printed and distributed to institutions outside the Federal establishment.

From that small beginning, the Depository Library Program has grown into a system of close to 1,400 Federal Depository Libraries. These libraries include many of the most prestigious libraries in the country. With few exceptions, all Congressional districts and territories of the United States have at least one Federal Depository Library.

## **II. Types of Designations**

There are two ways in which libraries can be designated Federal Depositories. Most libraries receive Federal depository status through designation by an elected or appointed Federal official. A smaller number of libraries, called "by-law" depositories, receive depository status through special provisions of Title 44, United States Code.

## **III. Designation Procedure for Libraries Seeking Depository Status from a Member of Congress**

1. Read the Guidelines for the Depository Library System and the text of Chapter 19, Title 44 U.S.C. in the Joint Committee Print entitled: A Directory of U.S. Government Depository Libraries, Section I, Government Depository Libraries.
2. Ascertain whether there is a Representative vacancy for a depository in your Congressional District or a Senatorial vacancy in your State by checking A Directory of U.S. Government Depository Libraries. Check also with the State's regional depository librarian (or the State Library if there is no regional library in your State) to see if there are any pending designations



in your State. You may also verify an existing vacancy by contacting the Designation Specialist at the following address:

Designation Specialist  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Library Programs Service (SLL)  
Washington, DC 20401  
202-275-1109

3. Review the Depository Checklist (see page 18).
4. Contact the Documents Librarian at the nearest depository. (If the nearest depository is within the same Congressional District, this will be especially important.) Ask to see the Instructions to Depository Libraries which are the official rules and regulations of the Depository Library Program. Also review the Federal Depository Library Manual. Ask the library directors of neighboring Federal depositories about the benefits, costs, and responsibilities of depository status.
5. If there is a vacancy, and if you feel that your library can best meet all of the requirements and responsibilities that go with Federal Depository Library status, then contact the documents librarian at your Regional depository (or State library if there is no Regional) to inform them of your interest in becoming a depository. GPO strongly recommends that prospective libraries discuss the advantages, disadvantages, workload, and responsibilities involved in being a depository with the regional librarian.
6. Telephone the local office of your Representative or Senator. Inform them that you are applying for the vacancy. If the person to whom you speak is unaware of the procedure, offer to have GPO send them further information. Obtain the person's name as a contact for future calls and correspondence.
7. Write a letter to the State Librarian asking for an evaluation and a letter of recommendation. This letter should include justification for the designation as described in Section 3-7 of the Guidelines for the Federal Depository System. The documents librarian at the State library should be informed of your letter to the State Librarian so that he/she can assure timely action.

8. The State Librarian will evaluate the application as described in Section 3-8 of the Guidelines, and will consult with the regional librarian regarding the application. After a favorable evaluation, the State Librarian will forward a copy of your letter, along with the recommendation for the additional depository library in the area, to the Senator or Representative.
9. The applying library will compose its formal justification for designation as a depository library and forward the letter to the Senator or Representative. The Member of Congress will then enclose both the State Library's and applying library's letters along with his/her request for depository designation to:

Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office (SD)  
Washington, DC 20401

Further procedural questions should be directed to:

Chief, Depository Services  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Library Programs Service (SLL)  
Washington, DC 20401  
202-275-1119

#### **IV. Designation Procedure for Libraries Eligible for By-Law Status**

Libraries eligible for by-law status include: Land grant colleges, service academy libraries, the major library of independent Federal agencies, the library of major bureaus or divisions of Federal departments, the library of the highest appellate court of a State, State libraries, and libraries of accredited law schools.

If the library is eligible for by-law status as a depository, but is currently filling a slot reserved for a Congressional or Senatorial designation, the library can switch to a by-law designation. This would not disrupt GPO's service to the depository, but it would free the Congressional or Senatorial designation for another library.

1. Read the Guidelines for the Depository Library System and the text of Chapter 19, Title 44 U.S.C. in the Joint Committee Print entitled: A Directory of U.S. Government Depository Libraries, Section I, Government Depository Libraries.
2. Review the Depository Checklist (see page 18).
3. Contact the Documents Librarian at the nearest depository. (If the nearest depository is within the same Congressional District, this will be especially important). Ask to see the Instructions to Depository Libraries which are the official rules and regulations of the Depository Library Program. Also review the Federal Depository Library Manual. Ask the library directors of neighboring Federal depositories about the benefits, costs, and responsibilities of depository status.
4. If you feel that your library can meet all of the requirements and responsibilities that go with Federal Depository Library status, then send a letter to the Office of the Public Printer requesting that depository status be granted to your library.
5. Along with the request for by-law status, the library needs to supply additional information certifying its eligibility for status under Title 44 U.S.C. The letter to the Public Printer should supply this information. Land grant colleges, service academy libraries, highest appellate State court libraries and State libraries must state under which provision of Title 44 U.S.C. they claim eligibility. If there is any question as to the library's eligibility, then this question must be resolved before a request for status is made.

A law school library must certify that it is accredited and supply the name of the accrediting body in its letter to the Public Printer.

Eligible Federal libraries should obtain a copy of The Designation Procedure for Federal Agency Depository Libraries and follow the procedures outlined in it. Requests for this publication should be sent to the Chief of Depository Services at the address shown below.

6. The Government Printing Office will notify the library once the complete application package has been received and is undergoing review by the Public Printer.



Further procedural questions should be directed to:

Chief, Depository Services  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Library Programs Service (SLL)  
Washington, DC 20401  
202-275-1119

## V. Sample Letters

The following sample letters are copies of letters that have been used to support past designations. The name of the library and other specific information on that library have been removed.

These sample letters are enclosed merely to give some guidance on the type of arguments usually given in designation requests. They **should not** be used as form letters. The library requesting designation need not have letters of support from other depositories or from the Regional, but a letter from the Regional is often sent.

### Letter From Library to Congressman Applying for Designation

The Honorable\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Congressman\_\_\_\_\_:

The \_\_\_\_\_ Library hereby applies for the vacant depository library designation in the \_\_\_\_ U.S. Congressional District of (state). We believe we can provide a service not now available to the residents of (town) in the \_\_\_\_ U.S. Congressional District. No (type) library is currently a depository in the area. The one library that has depository status in the district is some distance from (local area) and residents of our service area lack convenient access to this library.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Library is uniquely suited to serve the \_\_\_\_ U.S. Congressional District as a Federal Depository Library. The Library has just undergone a major building program. Substantial amounts of quality space would be available for a depository operation. The library is situated in an easily accessible site along major transportation routes. The

library's service area includes a significant proportion of the population in its U.S. Congressional District. As a (type) library, the library is freely accessible to all members of the general public.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Library is a member of the (group), a 70-member consortium. Residents of all communities within (region) may both use and borrow materials from our library. By placing the depository operation in the \_\_\_\_\_ Library, the entire consortium would benefit. We have consulted with a number of depositories in similar consortia in an effort to determine how best to use depository status to benefit all users of the consortium's libraries.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Library, with a collection of 200,000 volumes and a \$70,000 book budget, presently serves students, the general public, and our business community with numerous documents, including 13 items on the Appendix A list in the Guidelines for the Depository Library System. We are committed to expanding our government documents service, particularly in areas that would serve our business community. Becoming a depository would allow us to substantially increase our service without substantially increasing our costs. Funds currently spent to purchase government documents could be spent on commercial publications that would enhance the documents collection.

Our library is housed in a modern, easily accessible building, part of the Civic Center complex. Ample parking, convenient handicapped access ramps and one-floor design make the library attractive for public use. The Library is open seven days a week for a total of 80 hours.

The library provides proper housing for its materials and comfortable surroundings for persons doing research. It has a community meeting room and in the past year has hosted programs on tax assistance, community development, and many other areas of interest in dealing with government-related materials. Our quest for designation has the full support of the local Chamber of Commerce, the City Government, and numerous civic groups.

The library maintains a good public relations program, informing the public of its services through regular news releases to the local newspapers, as well as on its own cable television channel within the city. We have an excellent reputation for the quality of our staff and its service, and we will be supported by our City Government in this endeavor.

We realize that Federal depository library status is an honor that is granted to relatively few libraries, and that this status confers recognition from the Congressman or Senator of the special qualities of a library so honored. We fully appreciate the unique and very valuable asset that this status represents and we intend to use it productively.

Our head Reference Librarian, (name of librarian), will be in charge of the depository collection. This librarian has a Master's degree in Library Science, and has been active in the local government documents interest group. We intend to maintain memberships in a number of professional groups relating to Government documents in order to remain current in the ever changing government documents field.

We have read the Guidelines for the Depository Library System and the Instructions to Depository Libraries. We can comply with all the rules and regulations governing Federal Depository Libraries. We have consulted with our regional depository, (name of regional library); the (name) State Library; and the other depository in the \_\_\_ U.S. Congressional district of (state), (name of other library). You can expect letters of endorsement from them, following their receipt of copies of this letter. We will be happy to supply you with any additional information you may need, and hope you will recommend us to serve as the second depository of the \_\_\_ U.S. Congressional District of (state).

Sincerely,

(name)

(title)

(address & phone number)



**Letter From Other Depository in District To  
Congressman Supporting Designation**

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Congressman \_\_\_\_\_:

The (name of previously designated library) wishes to concur with the request of the \_\_\_\_\_ Library for designation as a United States Federal Depository.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Library seems well equipped to handle the responsibilities and the challenges that come with depository status. The library would serve an area of the Congressional district that is growing rapidly. It has a good reputation for public service and outreach. The library has anticipated the future needs of the depository operation.

It is clearly evident that the designation of \_\_\_\_\_ Library as a Federal Depository Library would insure that service is provided to many deserving residents in the \_\_\_ U.S. Congressional district of (state) who do not currently have easy access to a documents collection.

If I can be of further assistance please contact me.

Sincerely,  
(name of library director)  
(title)



## Letter From State Librarian Approving Designation

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Congressman \_\_\_\_\_:

I understand that the \_\_\_\_\_ Library is interested in being designated as a Federal Documents Depository. It is also my understanding that you have one available designation which could be used for this purpose. As you know, the State Library is required to make recommendations to members of Congress within the State. Since the choice of a depository will affect depository services for years to come, the State Library has taken this responsibility very seriously. I have carefully reviewed the arguments presented to me by the \_\_\_\_\_ Library, by the depository already located in your district, and by the Regional librarian.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend to you that you designate the \_\_\_\_\_ Library as a Federal Depository Library.

In recent years the \_\_\_\_\_ Library has greatly expanded their services and staff. In fact, they have recently opened a magnificent new building which would be an appropriate site for housing Federal documents. As you know, the (local) community is rapidly expanding and location of a Federal depository at the \_\_\_\_\_ Library would not only serve people within the local area, but a number of surrounding communities on the eastern plains.

I believe the \_\_\_\_\_ Library understands the responsibilities of a Federal Depository Library. The library's administration and staff seem fully committed to providing superior public service to all members of the general public.

Should you have any questions or need further documentation regarding justification for designating the \_\_\_\_\_ Library as a depository, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
(name of State Librarian)  
(title)  
(address and phone number)

## Letter From Regional Depository to Congressman Supporting Designation

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Congressman \_\_\_\_\_:

The (name of regional library) wishes to concur with the request of the \_\_\_\_\_ Library for designation as a United States Federal Depository.

As you know, your district covers a large area of the State and there is currently no depository easily accessible to residents in the eastern half of the district. As the State's Regional Federal Depository Library, we have gotten a number of referral and interlibrary loan requests from the \_\_\_\_\_ Library. This activity indicates a great deal of interest in government documents from that area of the State.

I have talked to \_\_\_\_\_ Library personnel about the responsibilities and costs of a Federal Depository operation. The library's administration seems to be fully committed to the goals of the Federal Depository Library Program.

The location of the \_\_\_\_\_ Library would give good geographic balance for the depositories in your district. The designation of \_\_\_\_\_ Library would provide a high level of public service to the citizens in the eastern half of your district.

Its facilities, its location, and its commitment to public service combine to make the \_\_\_\_\_ Library a superior candidate for Federal Depository Library designation.

Sincerely,  
(name of regional librarian)  
(title)  
(address and phone number)

**Designation Letter from Congressman to the  
Superintendent of Documents**

(name)  
Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20401

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I have received the enclosed letter from the librarian at \_\_\_\_\_  
Library requesting the vacant Federal Depository library designation in the  
\_\_ U.S. Congressional District of (state).

The librarian's letter contains a number of good arguments for the \_\_\_\_\_  
Library being designated a Federal Depository Library. The candidacy of  
the \_\_\_\_\_ Library was endorsed by the State Library and  
recommended by the State's Regional Federal Depository Library. In  
addition, I have received a number of letters supporting the designation of  
the \_\_\_\_\_ Library as a depository from various interested parties.

After careful review of the arguments presented on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_  
Library, I feel confident that the \_\_\_\_\_ Library is the best qualified  
candidate to fill the vacancy in my district. Its commitment to meeting the  
government information needs of the people of (local area) has been  
demonstrated in the past and I feel that the library will be able to meet the  
public service goals of the Depository Library Program for some time to  
come.

I am therefore pleased to designate the \_\_\_\_\_ Library as a Federal  
Depository Library. Please keep me informed on the progress of this  
designation by contacting my (local) office.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
(name)  
Member of Congress



**Letter from Superintendent of Documents to the Library  
Plus Acceptance Letters and Forms**

Name of Library Head

Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am in receipt of letters from the State Librarian, (name of State Librarian) and (title and name of designator), naming the (name of library) as a depository for United States Government publications.

The Depository Library Act provides that Federal Depository Libraries can select one copy of any publication distributed through the Federal Depository Library Program. Only those publications that meet the government information needs of the local population and for which the library can provide adequate facilities to receive and house, should be selected.

Depositories must contain 10,000 titles, other than those issued under the Federal Depository Library Program. Depositories must also provide for free public access to the depository collection, as well as reference service to assist the public in using depository materials. Since these publications remain the property of the Federal Government, the Superintendent of Documents is required by law to periodically ascertain conditions in depository libraries and to make firsthand investigations of conditions for which need is indicated. The enclosed forms will enable this office to include in its records certain pertinent information about your library. Please complete them, sign both copies of the Acceptance of Designation, and return all three forms to this Office. Your library will then be placed on the list of Federal depositories and you will be supplied with descriptive lists of publications.

Sincerely,  
Superintendent of Documents  
Enclosures



**Acceptance of Designation as a Depository for  
United States Government Publications**

To: Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20401

Acting as the duly appointed head of the \_\_\_\_\_ Library,  
under the powers conferred upon me by that Office, I hereby accept for  
the above mentioned Library the designation of that institution by the Hon.  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ from the State of \_\_\_\_\_ to be a  
depository for United States Government publications.

In consideration of the privilege of selecting and receiving those series of  
United States Government publications best suited to the needs of the  
patrons of this library and of the local population, from the various series  
which are made available to depository libraries by the Superintendent of  
Documents, it is hereby agreed that this library and its staff will abide by  
the law governing depository libraries, and such regulations and  
instructions as have been or may be issued by the Superintendent of  
Documents in administering the law.

It is further agreed that reasonable care will be exercised in selecting and  
maintaining publications to be furnished to this library so as to prevent  
waste of Government funds appropriated for distribution of depository  
publications.

I also certify that the statements given on the attached sheets are true to the  
best of my knowledge.

<hr/>		
Date	Signature of Head of Library	Title

COUNTERSIGNED:

<hr/>	
Date	Superintendent of Documents

*Note: Do not complete this form now. GPO will send a copy of this form  
after a library has been nominated.*

**By-Law Libraries**  
**Acceptance of Designation as a Depository for**  
**United States Government Publications**

To: Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20401

Acting as the duly appointed head of the \_\_\_\_\_  
Library, I hereby accept for the above-mentioned Library the designation  
of that institution as a depository for United States Government  
publications.

In consideration of the privilege of selecting and receiving those series of  
United States Government publications best suited to the needs of the  
patrons of this library and of the local population, from the various series  
which are made available to depository libraries by the Superintendent of  
Documents, it is hereby agreed that this library and its staff will abide by  
the law governing depository libraries, and such regulations and  
instructions as have been or may be issued by the Superintendent of  
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It is further agreed that reasonable care will be exercised in selecting and  
maintaining publications to be furnished to this library so as to prevent  
waste of Government funds appropriated for distribution of depository  
publications.

I also certify that the statements given on the attached sheets are true to the  
best of my knowledge.

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Date	Signature, Head of Library	Title
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COUNTERSIGNED:

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Date	Superintendent of Documents
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*Note: Do not complete this form now. GPO will send a copy of this form  
after a library has been nominated.*

**Statement to Accompany Acceptance of Designation  
As a Federal Depository Library**

1. What is the full name, address and telephone number of the library requesting status? (please type or print responses)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Congressional District: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # area code (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the mailing address for the receipt of depository publications?

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the full name and title of the administrative head of the library requesting status?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is your library freely accessible to all members of the general public, including the physically disabled? (check appropriate response)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (if no is checked, please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many hours per week is your depository collection opened to the general public?

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours/week

6. Are these hours different from the hours public service is offered to your primary patrons (students, faculty, judges, etc.)?

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (if yes is checked, please explain)

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7. How many volumes does your library contain other than U.S. government publications?

\_\_\_\_\_ volumes.

8. Does the library presently have adequate shelf space, microfiche cabinets and/or map cases for the government publications it would like to receive for the next two years?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (if no is checked, please explain)

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9. Is the space planned to house government documents readily accessible to members of the general public?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (if no is checked, please explain)

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10. What percentage of the depository collection do you intend to fully catalog?

100-75% \_\_\_\_\_ 74-50% \_\_\_\_\_ 49-25% \_\_\_\_\_  
less than 25% \_\_\_\_\_



11. Do you intend to shelflist your depository materials?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_(if no is checked, please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. How do you intend to address the government information needs of the local population?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Depository Checklist

This checklist lists items that most depositories will need to maintain an effective Federal depository operation.

## Public Service

- Free public access
- Reference assistance
- Collection development policy that addresses community needs
- Reference aids
- Photocopying facility
- Inter-library loan capability

## Staffing

- One professional librarian to coordinate depository activities
- One hour of support staffing per week for every one percent of item numbers selected
- Staff training in depository procedures and documents resources
- Procedures manual

## Equipment

- Personal computer (IBM compatible)
- CD ROM reader
- Fax machine
- 420 linear feet of shelving
- Processing area:
  - shelflist
  - sorting shelves
  - large processing table
  - book truck
- Microfiche reader
- Microfiche reader/printer
- Microfiche cabinets
- Map cases

- Rubber stamp with a changeable date, the library's name and the word "depository" or "document"
- Binders, pamphlet boxes, etc., for looseleaf depository materials

### **Publications (provided by GPO)**

- Federal Depository Library Manual - 1 copy
- Government Depository Libraries - 1 copy
- Guidelines for the Depository Library System - 1 copy
- Inactive or Discontinued Items from the 1950 Revision of the Classified List - 2 copies
- Instructions to Depository Libraries - 1 copy
- Item number cards - 1 set
- List of Classes . . . - 2 copies
- Union List of Item Selections (Microfiche) - 1 copy

